United Nations A/60/PV.42

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 1 November 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Agenda item 72 (*continued*)

Holocaust remembrance

Draft resolution (A/60/L.12)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/60/528)

The President: The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/60/L.12 is contained in document A/60/528.

Ms. Liu Zhongxin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to make the following statement on item 72 on behalf of Ambassador Wang Guangya, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the anti-fascist war and the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. Allow me to express, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our profound condolences in connection with the 6 million Jewish and other victims of the Holocaust and our sincere sympathy to all the bereaved families and the survivors of the Holocaust.

The Second World War was unprecedented in human history. During that war, Nazi forces planned to wipe out the entire Jewish nation step by step through extremely brutal and sanguinary acts — a gross and massive violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and an assault against civilizations.

The judgments of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal handed down at the trials of Nazi German war criminals upheld international justice and safeguarded human dignity, reflecting the common aspiration of peace- and justice-loving people throughout the world. It was a historic judgment, and a just one. It is irreversible and beyond contest.

Sixty years ago, military aggressors also inflicted untold misery on Asia. Casualties in China alone reached 35 million, of which more than 300,000 died during the 1937 Nanjing massacre. Like the Jewish people, the people of Asia will never forget that chapter in our history.

Our purpose in emphasizing such an indelible memory is not to perpetuate hatred but to use history as a mirror and to look into the future. The bitter lessons of the Second World War and the tragedy of the Nazi concentration camps have taught us that the basic values of freedom, democracy, equality, justice and peace cannot be denied, and that the civilizational process cannot be destroyed.

All evil, dark and reactionary forces are bound to be swept aside by the torrents of history. We hope that the countries concerned will draw lessons from history, pursue peaceful development and prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

05-59019 (E)

The Chinese delegation is in favour of adding the item entitled "Holocaust remembrance" to the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly and of adopting a draft resolution bearing the same title. We believe that the United Nations has the responsibility to teach succeeding generations the profound lessons of the Holocaust, refute any words or acts aimed at reversing the verdict on the Holocaust, and prevent the recurrence of such acts of genocide. We are convinced that substantive and consistent deliberations on this item in the General Assembly will reinforce the efforts of the United Nations system to realize the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, advance the dialogue among civilizations and religions, and promote respect for global diversity, thus enabling countries and peoples worldwide jointly to fulfil the historic mission of maintaining world peace and promoting common development.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan): It is appropriate for us to have another discussion on the Holocaust within the context of the work of the General Assembly, for we should never cease to draw the relevant lessons from that astonishing and terrifying period of human experience. The Holocaust was, and is, a different genocide — a genocide during which wickedness fell into union with human organization and efficiency of a sort hitherto unheard of, one which turned a continent into a slaughterhouse, with twentieth-century specifications.

In sum, it was a crime of the most colossal proportions. Therefore, in our invocation of history, which is what this draft resolution is all about, we must be precise and accurate. While most delegations here would view this topic as the historical narrative of others, for Europeans, the narrative is memory, as was stated most eloquently by the representatives of Norway, Austria, Hungary and Romania in this Hall on 24 January 2005.

It is certainly not the intention of this delegation to cast any aspersions in the direction of any particular quarter, for the Europe of today is not the Europe of the first half of the twentieth century. But there can be no sound discussion of this most serious issue without acknowledging the context in which it occurred.

The Holocaust was, in its broadest sense, a crime inflicted on European soil, by Europeans against Europeans. The administrative and logistical exertions in the commission of the crime were undertaken not just, as we know, by the Nazis of Germany, but also by several other sympathetic Governments from across Europe, Governments who arrested their own nationals when no crime had been committed and seized their estates and titles and virtually all that those people owned, before transporting them — men, women and children, the elderly and the infirm — to other parts of Europe to confront an uncertain and often terrible fate, while other Governments invoked policies amounting to indifference.

Sixty years on, we live at a time when it is still difficult for the vast majority of Member States to examine their own national histories to their very limits, particularly their modern histories. And while we should continue to feel great pride in what good we find in them, we must also begin to reckon with what in our national memory is distasteful or perhaps even criminal or terrible. It is therefore extraordinary and encouraging how a few European States have started to follow the example set by Germany many years ago, in beginning a process of recovering memory and in beginning a painful and critical, although ultimately liberating, self-examination where their part in the Holocaust is concerned.

But to what other purpose must we all draw on our memories generally and, in this instance, the memories of others? First and foremost, we must remind ourselves of the extent to which chauvinistic nationalisms and philosophies of negation can be pernicious. In the context of Europe in the 1930s, those feelings were channelled in the form of a virulent and abhorrent anti-Semitism. Today they could fan a revived anti-Semitism, or they could appear in the form of other expressions, akin to what we all have witnessed recently in the Balkans and in certain parts of Africa.

Given the historical suffering of the Jewish people and in view of the fact that European Jewry was the principal victim of the Holocaust, there has been a tendency by some to view the refrain "Never again" solely within that understanding: the context of the Jewish people and their future.

The concentration of evil found within the historical experience that is the Holocaust does, however, bring the point home for all peoples everywhere, Jewish and otherwise. And the principal lesson drawn by 100 members of the General Assembly is that if we are ever to make genocide and the like

truly unthinkable in the future, not only must we squarely confront the philosophies of negation within our own societies, wherever and whenever they occur, but, if we are to give true meaning to the phrase "Never again", we must also collectively support the existence of the world's only permanent judicial body designed to end impunity for the gravest of crimes — and that body is, of course, the International Criminal Court.

Unfortunately, and by contrast, "Never again" is also sometimes used as a form of moral justification for the implementation by one State of policies the effect of which is the continued domination of one people by another and the continued degradation of one people by another. And that is deeply unfortunate.

Ultimately, we hope this occasion and ones like this will enable us to derive the right lessons from the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their accomplices to ensure that such crimes will not come to blight the twenty-first century as it begins to unfold before us.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are gathered here today in remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust, innocent human beings who were the victims of ethnic and racial hatred and political and social intolerance. The Shoah is the greatest horror suffered by humanity in the twentieth century: the execrable extermination of more than one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities who died unjustly and cruelly, murdered only because they were different, only because they were not understood or tolerated.

That abominable outrage will forever burden the conscience of humanity and all nations, which belatedly realized that hatred, fanaticism, racism and prejudice lead but to the negation of life and to all that debases the human person. This is why the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that freedom, justice and peace in the world are based on recognition of the intrinsic dignity of the individual and equal and inalienable rights of all human beings, while disregard and contempt for human rights have been the cause of shocking barbarous acts against all humankind.

The present remembrance calls to our mind the saddest and most ignominious period of the history of humankind, confronting us with the greatest outrage inflicted on any people, an unjustifiable tragedy that humanity must not forget lest it suffer once again from such a horrendous and blind evil. During the ceremonies to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in southern Poland, the former Polish Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski reminded us, on behalf of the survivors, how Polish resistance had alerted the free world to the situation in Auschwitz but that no country in the world reacted adequately to the gravity of the situation. We are now engaged in a solemn act of remembrance, not only in order to alert future generations but also, fundamentally, to forge a new conscience in the peoples for the purpose of ensuring that no such ignominious crime will ever recur or be the object of complicit silence. Never again.

The circumstances that lead a more powerful social group to seek to annihilate another, weaker group or to demonstrate intolerance towards it, are the result of diverse and complex factors. Some factors relate to perverse ideologies, some to religious fanaticism and racist doctrines and others simply to fear. They all share the common characteristic of ignorance, which is nothing other than intolerance in disguise. That has driven certain social groups to act irrationally, committing the most inhuman and aberrant acts, such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, anti-Semitism, extremism and xenophobia — acts of evil whose victims are all human beings.

Thus, the constructive and peaceful coexistence of peoples depends on mutual respect and mutual understanding. Unless there is a genuine dialogue among nations and among civilizations, ignorance will persist and the human family will continue to be threatened or once again become its own victim. We must question some of our ancestral habits and deal honestly with the problems that separate us, seeking new channels for communication and change capable of generating a new conscience for future generations.

Guatemala knows only too well the horror caused by intolerance. Guatemalans have suffered in their own flesh the maelstrom of violence that afflicted our country merely because some people professed contrary views, held different beliefs or belonged to a different ethnic or social group. Today, Guatemalans are striving to know one another better and become more integrated, thus effacing all exclusivist and discriminatory ideologies and prejudices.

Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We therefore support the adoption of measures seeking to mobilize world society in order to assist in the prevention of all cruel, loathsome and degrading acts in the future and promote dialogue and tolerance. We also support the appeal for the elaboration of outreach programmes that instil the lessons of the Holocaust and the establishment of an education programme entitled "The Holocaust and the United Nations".

Pope John Paul II was truly inspired when he stated,

> "May it serve, today and for the future, as a warning: there must be no yielding to ideologies which justify contempt for human dignity on the basis of race, colour, language or religion."

The international community should, indeed, remain vigilant and should not delude itself into believing that the battle has been won to create a civilization that is truly liberal, humanistic and democratic, in which all people can live in peace and trust in a happy and prosperous justice.

Mr. Shin Kak-Soo (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by joining other delegations in expressing our deepest sympathy in connection with the millions of victims of the Holocaust during the Second World War, who were murdered because of their ethnic origins, religious faith or political beliefs, and in condemning in the strongest possible terms the horrific, inhuman crimes against humanity committed by the Nazi regime.

It goes without saying that such a horrendous tragedy should never be allowed to recur. To our dismay, however, we cannot deny that even today we are witnessing genocide and many crimes against humanity, from Srebrenica to Kigali to Darfur. Those recent acts of genocides and crimes against humanity, still fresh in our memory, compel the international community to redouble its efforts to put in place a reliable and effective security system that deters such heinous crimes and promotes mutual understanding and tolerance among people of all ethnicities, races, cultures and nations.

It was with such solemn obligations in mind that States Members of the United Nations convened a special session of the General Assembly early this year. On that occasion Member States committed themselves to doing their utmost to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity, while remembering and drawing lessons from the Holocaust and paying their respect to its victims.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of what we achieved regarding the responsibility to protect in the outcome document adopted at the world summit in September. The leaders of Member States agreed on the collective responsibility of the international community to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity when national authorities manifestly fail to do so. The faithful, swift and effective implementation of that responsibility to protect will help to prevent, deter or halt such situations. My delegation earnestly hopes that serious efforts will be made to carry forward that important development in following up the world summit.

As a country that suffered greatly from atrocities committed during the Second World War, the Republic of Korea has decided to become a sponsor of the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance. We believe that proclaiming 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust is a good way to ensure that the Holocaust's dreadful lessons are not forgotten. We cannot allow the memory of those crimes to fade with the passage of time.

We also believe strongly that any attempt to deny the Holocaust as a historical reality, in full or in part, must be rejected. It takes courage to tell the truth about the past when that truth is painful or even shameful. For many survivors of those crimes against humanity, it took years to recover the strength to tell their stories — stories which are now indelibly inscribed in our collective memory. That is also true for many of the Korean victims who suffered very severely during the Second World War. We cannot build a positive, sustainable future if we turn a blind eye to our painful past. As has often been said, those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat it. Facing up to the truth of history and learning its lessons is not a choice but an obligation.

In this regard, we strongly support the draft resolution's recommendation to develop educational programmes that will teach the lessons of the Holocaust to future generations. It is the collective obligation of humanity to promote education and tolerance so that there will never again be a similar

tragedy. We hope that such education will consist of more than the recital of a ritualized litany of horrors. Instead, future generations must be taught about that chapter in history in a way that enables them to understand how it happened and to prevent its recurrence.

The Republic of Korea is firmly committed to upholding the dignity of all human beings and to respecting human rights for all. We pledge our unwavering support for the efforts of the United Nations to protect and promote the fundamental human rights and dignity of all humanity. Although it is too late for the millions of victims of the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity during and since the Second World War, we should work as hard as we can to ensure that human rights are respected and secure for future generations. It is our deepest wish that, through the teaching of truth and the fostering of tolerance, our children will grow up in a new world free from the traumas and tragedies of the century that we so recently left behind.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution to be adopted today is a testament to terrible grief and pain. For the people of my country, Belarus, such pain is not an alien experience; it is our pain as well. The flames of blind racial hatred and ethnic exclusion did not only claim countless victims in Belarus. The brutality of the Nazi regime and the incinerating flames of the Holocaust are seared into the soul of the people of Belarus.

Why, 60 years after the end of the Second World War, are we still returning to this topic — not as a distant and tragic chapter of our history, but as a page in our collective life that has not yet been turned? Why do many millions of people throughout the world continue to experience the daily, direct and obvious threat of death and unbearable suffering that result from ideas of racial superiority and ethnic enmity?

There are two possible answers to that question. One of them is understandable at the human level. The other is something that no one who has a heart can reconcile himself to.

On the one hand, the wounds caused by the Second World War proved so deep that, even many decades after it ended, we cannot heal. We still feel the unbearable pain of loss. Our blood still runs cold at the thought of the terrible abyss into which human beings were plunged by the Second World War. Let us once again ponder the living heritage of the war in our souls at a time when we, the community of nations, are called upon to decide which pages of our common history can be turned with a clear conscience, and which cannot.

On the other hand, the page on which the Holocaust is written — the story of the victims and of the suffering inflicted by the plague of Naziism on so many peoples — cannot and must not be turned as long as humankind has not fully learned the lessons of the Second World War and the lessons of the Holocaust.

We know that we have not yet learned those lessons. However, we cannot do so on our own; the evil inflicted by the Holocaust is too great. Humankind must learn those lessons jointly.

As long as we live in a world divided into "us and them", as long as we feel that the bitter lessons of history must be learned by others and not by us, as long as we do not do everything in our power to understand and welcome those who do not resemble us, the echoes of the Holocaust will continue to resound in our hearts.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): While aligning myself fully with the statement by the European Union presidency, I would like to make a few remarks on behalf of Ukraine.

The Holocaust is a permanently painful subject not only for the Jewish people but for the world community as a whole. We remember the enormous suffering of those who perished in the death camps at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau and many other horrific sites, where, in the name of a perverse and inhuman ideology, millions of human beings were deliberately and cruelly exterminated. Jews and gypsies, men and women, children and the elderly — the sons and daughters of different nations, including hundreds of thousands from Ukraine, became the innocent victims of a ruthless political system that caused immense losses to humankind.

The terrible images of the Holocaust were vivid in the minds of those who authored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of those who adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Many thought that the horrors of the Second World War — the camps, the cruelty, the exterminations that took place during the Holocaust —

could never happen again. And yet they have — in Cambodia, Srebrenica, Rwanda and, most recently, in Darfur.

In that respect, we are deeply convinced that the history of the Holocaust must be learned and extensively explained so that a similar tragedy never happens again. The inter-ethnic conflicts that, unfortunately, continue to take place in the world today show that humankind still lacks tolerance and that the lessons of the Holocaust remain highly relevant and require the continued attention of the entire membership of the United Nations.

The history of Holocaust is widely studied and taught in Ukraine. The Government of Ukraine supports the initiative of the Jewish community to create a Ukrainian Museum of the Holocaust in Kiev. We hope that this project will be implemented soon.

The Orange Revolution has led to dramatic social and political changes in Ukraine, which I am sure will have a positive impact on the lives of its Jewish community, which has made a worthy contribution to the strengthening of my country's independence.

At the Government level, we are doing our best to create adequate conditions for the revitalization and development of all minority communities in Ukraine. The minority legislation put in place to ensure inter-ethnic harmony and national diversity in Ukraine fully accords with the highest international human rights standards.

As we commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, Ukraine cannot but recall the terrible damage which intolerance, violence and aggression caused it in the past. This year marks the seventy-second anniversary of one of the most tragic chapters in Ukraine's history, the Great Famine of 1932-33 — in Ukrainian, *Holodomor*, which means "death by famine". Deliberately aimed at the very core of the Ukrainian nation, the cruel campaign of terror by hunger carried out by the totalitarian Soviet regime led to the deaths of seven to 10 million innocent men, women and children.

The scourge of Holodomor remains a deep psychological trauma for our people. After more than seven decades, that catastrophe is clearly one of the most shocking crimes ever committed against humankind. Yet Holodomor continues to be one of those national tragedies that still await wide international recognition.

Two years ago, a joint statement on the seventieth anniversary of Holodomor, supported by more than 60 delegations — a third of the membership of the United Nations — was issued as an official document of the General Assembly. In that declaration, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, Holodomor was officially recognized as a national tragedy of the Ukrainian people, caused by the cruel actions and policies of a totalitarian regime. Representatives of States from various parts of the world expressed sympathy in connection with the victims of Holodomor and deplored the acts and policies that caused mass starvation and killed millions of people.

Ukraine will continue to do its utmost to bring the truth about Holodomor and the Holocaust to the world at large. We believe that it is high time that the international community recognized that crime as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation.

The memory of recent instances of genocide, crimes against humanity and gross and flagrant violations of human rights should never fade from our minds. Ukraine has therefore wholeheartedly supported and sponsored the draft resolution before us for adoption.

We in Ukraine have done and will continue to do everything in our power to prevent the ideology of totalitarianism, dictatorship, xenophobia and anti-Semitism from taking root in our national soil.

My country is ready to assume its share of the collective responsibility to stop ongoing tragedies and to prevent future crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect against genocide, as an important and promising outcome of the recent world summit, should, in our view, be practically implemented and further developed.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The Jewish Holocaust is the paradigmatic case of genocide, a crime that until that time lacked a definition and did not allow for legal recourse. None of the Hague Conventions mentioned genocide, nor could the massacres that had taken place be properly judged or their perpetrators punished owing to the lack of a legal definition of genocide.

Of particular historical resonance in our part of the world are the crimes committed against the indigenous peoples of the Americas during the colonial period and during the period when slavery was practised. It remains profoundly shocking to the conscience of mankind that those crimes could have reached such inconceivable proportions.

The profound impact of the Jewish Holocaust and of the mass war crimes committed during the Second World War prompted the international community to attempt, through this Organization, to define genocide as an international crime and to bring its perpetrators to justice. Thus, in 1948, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and, more recently, the crime was incorporated into the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The fight against the crime of genocide will only be complete when Member States adhere to and implement human rights instruments in both the domestic and the international spheres. That will constitute the most important tribute to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and honour the Remembrance Day.

In remembering the Holocaust, the international community not only renews its indignation and rejection, but also strengthens its commitment to fight oppression and prejudice wherever they may take place. In evoking the torment and tragedy of the Jewish people during the Holocaust, we are able to confront the destructive forces that threaten the human march towards freedom, justice and democracy.

Even after the Jewish Holocaust, late twentieth century history has, unfortunately, been marked by a series of brutal conflicts that have again resulted in grave war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and other serious crimes. Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda constitute a few blatant examples. They add to our sense of abhorrence and indignation and strengthen our resolve to prevent similar crimes.

As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, Brazil once again expresses its absolute condemnation of the Holocaust, reaffirms its great respect for the victims and manifests its solidarity with the survivors of that unspeakable crime.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic, whose best tradition has been to welcome upon its territory communities from all corners of the world to live in peaceful and productive coexistence and which has itself suffered acts of cruelty against human dignity, co-sponsors draft resolution A/60/L.12 and supports that reminder, with special feelings of emotion and commitment to participate in this collective act by the international community to ensure that humankind never again witnesses the genocide we remember today.

Collective remembrance is indispensable in a world overwhelmed by the need to solve new problems and at a time when young people may think that the Holocaust was an event of history that occurred under specific political circumstances and for reasons that no longer exist. They are wrong. Faced with that possible reaction, we must realize that no country in the world can consider itself immune from a future wave of violence fuelled by intolerance, economics, religious fundamentalism, political intolerance or racial conflict, or even a combination of any of them.

Therefore, we support the declaration of 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, as well as the other measures proposed in the draft resolution, in order to keep the memory of that shameful episode in the history of mankind, alive.

The Holocaust showed us major truths that must not be forgotten. First, the sacrifice of the Jewish people, which is a tragic example of the harm that we, as human beings can inflict upon on another. It transcends all cultural, political and religious boundaries and teaches a terrible and profound lesson to us all. Regrettably, racist anti-Semitism, in spite of so much that has been done to fight it, periodically reemerges in the infamous attacks that we see against synagogues, the desecration of cemeteries and the cynical speculations of supposed historians who modify or deny the events that occurred.

Those irrational acts that derive from fanatical ideology, ignorance, denial and distrust of the other are part and parcel of the darkest aspects of the human condition. In different situations and places they move to other communities and groups, which suffer their own share of shame, like the ones that this Organization has been able to document in the very

serious episodes that occurred in various regions of the world not so long ago.

In our modest understanding, the main thing we have learned has been the obligation of all men and women to affirm the equality and essential fraternity of each person, despite different nationalities, cultures or religious idiosyncrasies.

The United Nations was created to prevent war and resolve conflicts. It is therefore auspicious that the Organization should establish an annual day of reflection, from now on, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the destruction of the Nazi regime. It is precisely through that framework that significant efforts over several decades have led to the creation of an edifice whose foundation is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and which has been further developed and strengthened through declarations and treaties that reinforce the conditions necessary for the achievement of universal respect for human dignity.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) began to function not long ago, seeking to deter possible crimes and punish those who attempt to escape their grave responsibilities.

We are in a crucial moment of history when we are all called upon to make further efforts of generosity in order to face up to new challenges and threats to a future of peace based upon respect for all persons and peoples. My country believes that task must be carried out within the collective framework of the United Nations. If we want to avoid repeating the cycle of history and avoid another Holocaust and genocide such as occurred in the last century, we must keep alive the memory of what happened, by giving the United Nations powerful tools to effectively protect human rights in all circumstances and at all times.

We are convinced that this day will motivate calm reflection as we address the future together, aware of our historic responsibilities to design a fairer and more peaceful world that will save mankind from further suffering and will prevent a recurrence of the collective tragedies that we remember today.

The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Austria attaches great significance to the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance and is honoured to be among its earliest sponsors. The designation of 27 January, the day of liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust is of special significance to all of us. Auschwitz is of global relevance.

For Austria, this day is a reminder of the dark sides of our past. We feel the agony of knowing that our country lost so many of its Jewish citizens to the Holocaust. At the same time we feel the pain of realizing that far too many Austrians took part in the genocide, a crime of colossal proportions.

Simon Wiesenthal, who passed away a few weeks ago, helped us to come to terms with our past when he said, "For your benefit, learn from our tragedy". He showed us that education and information are powerful tools for preventing the tragic repetition of history. Today, we should all remember Simon Wiesenthal's speech to the General Assembly 10 years ago (*see A/50/PV.66*). He called upon the international community to warn younger generations against prejudices, especially the prejudice of racial hatred, which has led to immeasurable human suffering. Austria is conscious of its responsibility and is taking a broad spectrum of measures to fight anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other forms racism and intolerance at all levels.

We have successfully initiated national programmes aimed at teaching our young people about the lessons of history. The young generation, representing our future, must be taught that no country and no society can achieve any degree of progress or development without respect for human rights and the dignity of each human being. That is the lesson that the memory of Auschwitz hands down from generation to generation.

The International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust should serve to make us aware of what we lost and what was destroyed. Our challenge for the future will be to preserve the memory of the millions killed in Auschwitz and elsewhere by an inhuman regime and to make sure that it will never happen again. Our common challenge is to create a more just and more democratic society that is free of hatred.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): Remembering is a duty and a common responsibility. That is especially true in the case of the Holocaust. So, my delegation welcomes the draft resolution on Holocaust remembrance and congratulates all those that sponsored it.

The responsibility of all nations to remember gains new strength as we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the extermination camps and the establishment of the United Nations.

For 60 years, we have had the horror of this kind of crime before us, and yet, history has repeated itself. An international convention against that crime has not prevented the kind of thinking that leads to genocide, the violence that sparks genocide, the injustices that make it possible or the interests that allow a genocide to be sustained over time. The twentieth century witnessed genocides, atrocities, mass killings and ethnic cleansings, which, deplorably, were not confined to just one continent. As we stand before the Holocaust, it is only right that we remember and pledge to make the best collective efforts to ensure that, having now named this crime, the world's nations will recognize it for what it is and prevent it in the future.

In that context, we would do well to recall and renew our support for Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), which condemns the incitement of terrorist acts in the strongest terms and repudiates attempts at the justification or glorification of terrorist acts, as they may incite further terrorist acts. It further emphasizes the continuing international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, in an effort to prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures and to address unresolved regional conflicts and the full range of global issues.

After the Shoah, the first step towards prevention was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Many more steps forward are needed. In every country, the memory of the Holocaust must be preserved as a commitment to spare future generations such horror.

During his visit to the Holy Land, the late Pope John Paul II made a point of going to Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Shoah. At the foot of the Temple's Western Wall he prayed for forgiveness and for the conversion of hearts and minds.

Asking for pardon purifies the memory, and remembering the Holocaust gives us an occasion for that purification of memory to occur. We can detect early symptoms of genocide, reject them and take timely, firm measures to overcome social and international injustices of all kinds.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.12.

The following countries are to be added to the list of sponsors: Azerbaijan, Congo, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution without a vote?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/7).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has participated in the adoption by consensus of resolution 60/7 and is in full agreement with the States that sponsored the resolution and endorsed the memorandum of explanation accompanying the draft resolution, which affirmed that the Holocaust constituted a systematic and barbaric attempt to annihilate an entire people in a manner and of a magnitude that has no comparison in the history of humankind.

Nevertheless, moderation, restraint and respect for truth should guide us, when speaking of the annihilation of a people in the manner and of the magnitude of that which took place in the so-called Second World War, which was the historical context of the Holocaust. We must also recall other holocausts that also took place during that terrible and barbarous conflict and those which came to light at that conflict's end, all equally attributable to founding States of the United Nations that were part of the coalition that defeated the Nazi Fascism exclusively at the military level around the year 1945.

We are referring to the annihilation of the defenceless population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who were victims of a deliberate, devastating destruction by the use of nuclear weapons, without

any justification, and to the silent, low-intensity daily annihilation of peoples of the world, whose adults and children are condemned to misery, hunger, ignorance and repression with no escape or hope, as a result of the exploitation and the barbarous, systematic neglect to which they have been submitted during centuries by colonialist and imperialist States and elites that were also the principal actors of the aforementioned war. The annihilation continues today, at the start of the twenty-first century, giving rise to a popular insurgency that seeks to restore justice.

Nor can we forget that the States that participated in the same world conflict or in conflicts that have occurred since 1945 are responsible for acts of State terrorism in the form of successive holocausts — that is, the systematic genocide of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. We must incorporate that fact into our collective memory as Members of the United Nations, inspired by the same humanistic feelings that the resolution embodies in one of its preambular paragraphs, so that we do not forget the fundamental principle of the Charter to protect future generations from the scourge of war.

We all know that there are many ways to wage war, some of them novel. There are low- and high-intensity wars, which make use of weapons of immediate destruction, or more subtle, less apparent means of mass liquidation.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela also shares the concern and sense of urgency with regard to establishing educational programmes to eradicate from the face of the Earth genocide as a political act to exterminate groups of human beings or entire peoples on the unspeakable pretext of hatred, racism and the fundamentalist, obsessive and messianic blindness that characterizes religious intolerance. We call upon those States that, together with us, supported the resolution to ensure that the educational programmes proposed therein are designed, in a balanced and well-thought-out manner, to put an end to holocausts and to raise global awareness of the perversion and crime against humanity that is genocide — including the genocide of the Jewish people, which deserves universal repudiation.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): Having joined the consensus to adopt the resolution without a vote, my delegation would like to express its reservations with regard to operative paragraphs 2 and 6, as well as to some of the procedural aspects surrounding its adoption.

We fully share and understand the feelings of the sponsors with regard to the need for Holocaust remembrance. We have no objection to designating 27 January as a day of remembrance in connection with the Holocaust because of our firm belief that the victims of genocide, regardless of their religion or ethnic background, should not be forgotten.

On the other hand, the resolution fails to address the responsibilities of the society in which the Holocaust was perpetrated and its socio-political and racist causes. Furthermore, we should ask ourselves why we should restrict the resolution on the Holocaust, forgetting similar crimes of genocide against Christians and Muslims in Rwanda, and against Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srebrenica, Sanski Most, Kosovo and elsewhere.

Why are we establishing a special international programme to promote awareness of the Holocaust — which represented a heinous and horrible crime against the Jews — while forgetting equal atrocities against Muslims, Christians and others, and refraining from establishing similar programmes to increase public awareness of them? We believe that no one should have a monopoly on suffering.

We are firm in our belief that the established mechanism, in accordance with the resolution, should apply to the victims of genocide as a whole, worldwide, without discrimination on the basis of religious or ethnic background. We trust that the sponsors will consider our strong reservations and reflect on how to put things back into the right perspective. We reserve the right to do so ourselves.

We further trust that the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, while establishing the proposed outreach programme, as well as other mechanisms provided for in the resolution, will attach equal importance to the implementation of other resolutions on similar issues, such as racism, intolerance, the rise of ultra-nationalism, neo-Nazism and xenophobic and other movements. We further trust that the General Assembly will attach the same importance to financing other activities in similar resolutions in full. In that context, we reserve the right to assist in the implementation of such resolutions all together, so as to ensure equal treatment for all victims of genocide, including the victims of the Holocaust, and the right to

decide our course of action with regard to the resolution in the future accordingly.

Ms. Ismail (Malaysia): My delegation joined the consensus on the resolution on Holocaust remembrance. We condemn the Holocaust, as it constituted a systematic and barbarous attempt to annihilate an entire people in a manner and on a scale that have no parallel in human history. Yet its lessons are universal, and my delegation feels that we should draw on them. There are other events that are no less tragic which would benefit from the lessons learned from the Holocaust.

In this connection, my delegation would have preferred operative paragraph 2 of the resolution to be broader in scope so as to include inculcating in future generations the lessons not only of the Holocaust, but also other acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Mr. Anshor (Indonesia): I am pleased to explain my delegation's position with regard to the resolution that has just been adopted. My delegation went along with its adoption on the basis of a number of understandings.

First, we recognize that the Holocaust represents a dark episode in human civilization, whose lessons must never be forgotten if we are to save future generations from similar atrocities. However, the Holocaust is not the only human tragedy that provides such lessons. There are numerous others that send an equally strong message and warning to all people of the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice. Human history, whether classical or contemporary, registers a long list of human tragedies. Therefore, we would have preferred it if the sponsors, in formalizing and institutionalizing Holocaust remembrance and education within the United Nations system through the resolution, had given equal attention to other human tragedies.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

The representative of Japan has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind representatives that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ozawa (Japan): My delegation wishes to exercise its right reply in connection with the statement made by the representative of China regarding atrocities during the Second World War in Asia. Mistakes made in our past history must be remembered. We must learn from them and resolve never to allow them to happen again. Only by learning from the past can humanity make progress in the future.

Japan has made its own mistakes in its recent history. On the occasion of the recent Asia-Africa summit in Indonesia, Prime Minister Koizumi stated,

> "In the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. Japan squarely faces those facts of history in a spirit of humility. And with a feeling of deep remorse and heartfelt apology always engraved in mind, Japan has resolutely and consistently maintained since the end of the Second World War never to turn into a military power but to be an economic power and its principle of resolving all matters by peaceful means without recourse to the use of force.
>
> "Japan once again states its resolve to contribute to the peace and the prosperity of the world, in the future as well, prizing the relationship of trust it enjoys with the nations of the world."

In that spirit, the Japanese people, since the end of the Second World War, have striven to rebuild our nation as a free, democratic and peace-loving nation. My delegation wishes to point out that in discussing history, it would be more constructive to have a common understanding of the historical facts, especially of the figures involved. In that spirit, the Foreign Minister of Japan has proposed to the Foreign Minister of China to conduct joint academic research.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): At this unique and historic moment, I would like to extend Israel's special appreciation and thanks to the general membership of the Assembly for adopting this unprecedented resolution and to the original sponsors, Australia, Canada, Russia and the United States. The active support of the European Union, led by the United Kingdom presidency from the outset of the process,

has also been invaluable. I would also like to thank the 104 sponsors of the resolution.

I wish to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his ongoing support and to Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor for his interest and involvement in the matter. And I would like to thank you, Sir, in your role as President of the General Assembly, for your guidance, compassion and leadership throughout this process and during this historic debate.

Finally, in memory of the 6 million Holocaust victims and in honour of the survivors, I give thanks for this universal and historic resolution and its adoption by the Assembly, citing the words of the Jewish prayer: Blessed be the Lord who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this day.

The President: In view of the explanations of vote after the vote and the statements in right of reply, I just want to repeat portions of my remarks at the 41st meeting, on the introduction of the resolution — the first resolution of this kind.

"The Holocaust also reminds us of the crimes of genocide committed since the Second World War. It must therefore be a unifying historic warning around which we rally, not only to recall the grievous crimes committed in human history but also to reaffirm our unfaltering resolve to prevent the recurrence of such crimes. We cannot, after the horrors in Cambodia, Rwanda and Srebrenica, continue to repeat, 'Never again'.

"...

"It is in the spirit both of remembering the crimes of the past and preventing their recurrence in the future that we must consider the ... resolution on Holocaust remembrance."

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 72.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.